

**STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE  
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
BUREAU OF RAIL AND TRANSIT**

**CONFERENCE REPORT**

**DATE OF MEETING:** October 16, 2013

**LOCATION OF MEETING:** NHDOT, 5 Hazen Drive, Concord NH – Franconia Notch  
Conference Room – RM 205

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Nik Coates, Central NH Planning Commission  
Terry Johnson, Healthy Eating Active Living NH  
Mark Samsel, NH Rail Trails Coalition  
Eric Feldbaum, Department of Resource and Economic Development  
Erik Paddleford, NHDOT Rail and Transit  
Dave Topham, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH  
Rick Taintor, Portsmouth Planning Department  
Jeff Latimer, Gus' Bike Shop  
Scott Bogle, Rockingham Planning Commission (by phone)

**GUESTS PRESENT:**

Larry Keniston, NHDOT Rail and Transit  
Jim Kirouac, NHDOT Highway Design  
Scot Foster, Department of Health and Human Services  
Craig Tufts, Central NH Planning Commission  
Tim Blagden, Bike-Walk Alliance of NH

**SUBJECT:** Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Advisory Committee (BPTAC)

**NOTES ON MEETING:**

The meeting started at approximately 1 pm with welcome and introductions.

**Approval of September Minutes**

The committee approved the minutes of the September meeting.

**Commissioner's Blog and BPTAC Recommendation**

The committee reviewed the draft blog written by Jeff Latimer and discussed points made and potential changes before forwarding on to the DOT front office for review and posting on the Commissioner's blog web page. Regina Flynn volunteered to include the changes discussed into the next draft of the blog. A recommendation letter to the commissioner was discussed which

could include wording indicating that roads should be safe for all road users, not just motorists. The letter could also ask for support for two pieces of 2014 legislation related to bike/ ped. One is in regards to distracted driving sponsored by the Department of Safety and the other is in regards to vulnerable user proposed by Bike Walk Alliance of NH. The group also discussed BPTAC, the Driving Toward Zero program, and Safe Routes to School all have the same basic focus of making the roadways safer for all users. We are all looking to the same end result of zero deaths.

### **NHPASS/Signage Policy**

The committee reviewed the current NHDOT bike signage policy, dated 2007 and discussed the upper valley NH PASS pilot program. Sign photos showing the “3 foot rule” signs used in the upper valley region were reviewed along with other sign photos included signs in the town of Rye with the wording “bicyclist must keep right & ride in single file”. The current “share the road signs” MUTCD sign ID’s W11-1 and W16-1 are considered confusing to motorists and committee members felt these should be changed.

The signage subcommittee will review the DOT policy in more detail to determine what changes are needed and make recommendations to improve the policy as part of its work.

The AG’s office has indicated the single file signs in Rye go against state law. The committee would like to pursue a letter from the AG’s office providing an evaluation of the legality of the Rye bicycle signage.

### **Status Update from Subcommittees**

Mark Samsel gave an update on the NH Bicycle and Pedestrian Grant program. A 100k donation was made by an anonymous donor to fund bicycle and pedestrian projects in NH. The program is not affiliated with NHDOT, but the BPTAC is interested in knowing what projects are looking for funding in NH and what the need is.

The grant application is a 2-part process. The first round, involving a short application, is closed. 58 applications were submitted which represents approximately \$1 million in requested funding. Strong applicants from the first round will be asked to submit a more substantial second application. Projects recommendation will be forwarded to the donor for a final decision on December 1, 2013.

The donor has also indicated that there could be a second round of funding next year that could take place as early as February 2014.

Scott Bogle gave an update on the conference call with the bike ped/plan subcommittee. The subcommittee discussed the current bike/ped plan that was written in 2000 and what concerns members had with it. The committee plans to review several other state bike/ped plans in detail and will discuss the scope and process for developing a new plan and what the process for public involvement will be. Scott noted that Vermont has a good plan and that the committee would like to focus more on policy for this plan and less on design guidelines in order to keep costs down.

There are lots of good design guideline out there, so there may not be a need to spend money developing new guidelines. More time should be spent on public outreach and involvement with a focus on getting broad public involvement and input.

The next meeting for the bike ped plan subcommittee is scheduled for November 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **Funding for projects**

CNHRPC is not comfortable with being the fiscal agent for all the BPTAC projects. Since this original scenario will not work, DOT Planning has indicated they are willing to allow multiple RPC's as fiscal agents. Having RPC's as fiscal agents instead of DOT allows for a more streamlined subcontracting process that will save time when it comes to contracting with engineering firms for BPTAC project work.

The next step is to determine if other RPCs are willing to be fiscal agents for the various BPTAC projects that require funding and amending the RPC contracts with NHDOT as needed. Governor and Council approval will be needed for any RPC contract amendments.

### **Transition Strategy, Member Appointments and Election of Officers**

Nik Coates indicated his last day at CNHRPC will be November 29<sup>th</sup>. He will be the new Executive Director of the Association of Conservation Commissions. He would like to step down as Chair of the BPTAC, but is willing to continue on the committee in the at-large member position.

Mark Samsel was reappointed as Vice Chair, Nik Coates was appointed as Interim Chair, until a replacement can be found. The committee voted to make the secretary position official and appointed Erik Paddleford to that position.

The committee consensus was also to appoint Nik Coates to the at-large position that has been vacant. This leaves the CNHRPC rural RPC committee member position open. Craig Tufts has expressed interest to fill this position.

### **Advocacy Update**

Vulnerable user, GACIT, advocacy efforts

Tim Blagdon indicated vulnerable user legislation has been filed (LSR 2311). It is not in document form yet, but when it becomes a bill the actual language will be available. DOS is planning on submitting a distracted driver bill as well. A complete streets bill will be taken up in the future.

Scott Bogle commented on the GACIT hearings that are taking place around the state. The hearings are coming to an end, but written comments are still welcome until the end of October.

Since reduced funding is available under new TA program, bike ped community would like to see the commitment to bike ped safety maintained and to not shift to new TA lower funding levels.

### **Other Business**

Jim Kirouc indicated project development looks at bike and ped aspects when projects are designed. When projects are initiated public information sessions are scheduled in order to get input from the public and town officials. Unless people speak up, then it is difficult to get those extra features into the projects. Public meetings where input is provided are helpful in giving direction to project development.

Tim and Nik will receive training from the Community Spokes Program in Maine. It is part of the Bicycle Coalition of Maine and trains individuals on how to be an advocate for bike and pedestrian transportation at the local level.

**Next Meeting:** November 20, 1-3 pm, at DOT